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Item 14 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Social and human rights questions: social development

Letter dated 2 May 2000 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the World NGO Summit on Disability held from 10 to 12 March 2000 in Beijing, which adopted the Beijing Declaration on the Rights of People with Disabilities in the New Century, calling for the initiation of a process leading to the adoption of an international convention on the rights of all people with disabilities (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 106, and of the Economic and Social Council, under item 14 (b) of the provisional agenda.

(*Signed*) **Wang** Yingfan
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
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* E/2000/100.

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Annex to the letter dated 2 May 2000 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Beijing Declaration on the Rights of People with Disabilities in the New Century

Adopted on 12 March 2000 at the World NGO Summit on Disability

1. *We*, the leaders of Disabled People's International, Inclusion International, Rehabilitation International, the World Blind Union and the World Federation of the Deaf, as well as national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) of and for people with disabilities from all continents, have convened in Beijing from 10 to 12 March 2000 to develop a new century strategy for the full participation and equality of people with disabilities.

2. *We recognize*, with appreciation, that the last two decades of the twentieth century witnessed an increased awareness of issues faced by over 600 million people with disabilities, assisted in part by various United Nations instruments.

3. *We express deep concern* that such instruments and mandates have yet to create a significant impact on improving the lives of people with disabilities, especially women and girls with disabilities, who remain the most invisible and marginalized of all disadvantaged social groups.

4. *We emphasize* that the continued exclusion of people with disabilities from the mainstream development process is a violation of fundamental rights and an indictment of humankind at the inception of the new century.

5. *We share the conviction* that the full inclusion of people with disabilities in society requires our solidarity in working towards an international convention that legally binds nations, to reinforce the moral authority of the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities.

6. *We believe* that the inception of the new century is an opportune time for people with diverse disabilities and their organizations, and other civic organizations, local and national Governments, members of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental bodies, as well as the private sector, to collaborate closely in an inclusive and wide consultative process aimed at the development and adoption of an international convention to promote and protect the rights of people with disabilities, and enhance equal opportunities for participation in mainstream society.

7. *We therefore urge* all heads of State and Government, public administrators, local authorities, members of the United Nations system, people with disabilities, civic organizations that participate in the development process, and socially responsible private sector organizations, to immediately initiate the process for an international convention, including by raising it in all forthcoming international forums, especially the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on social development, the NGO Millennium Forum, the United Nations Millennium Assembly and related preparatory meetings.

8. *We further urge* all participants in this process to actively facilitate the adoption of such a convention, which should address, *inter alia*, the following areas of priority concern:

(a) Improvement of the overall quality of life of people with diverse disabilities, and their upliftment from deprivation, hardship and poverty;

(b) Education, training, remunerative work, and participation in decision-making processes at all levels;

(c) Elimination of discriminatory attitudes and practices, as well as information, legal and infrastructural barriers;

(d) Increased allocations of resources to ensure the equal participation of people with disabilities.

9. *We hereby send out* a call to action to all concerned with equality and human dignity, to join together in widespread efforts embracing national capitals, towns and cities, remote villages, and United Nations forums, to ensure the adoption of an international convention on the rights of all people with disabilities.

10. *We commit* our respective organizations to strive for a legally binding international convention on the rights of all people with disabilities to full participation and equality in society.